(d) The Government of India launched the Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission under which emphasis is laid on drinking water quality through removal of excess fluoride, arsenic and other pollutants in water. The Central Government supplements the efforts of the State Government by providing Central assistance under the Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP). The State Government have been delegated powers to plan, sanction and implement their individual rural water Supply schemes under the ARWSP.

As per the guidelines for implementation of Rural Water Supply Programme, upto 20% of the funds under ARWSP can be utilised for sub-mission activities designed to address water quality and sustainability issues. Further, powers to sanction sub-mission projects have been delegated to the State with effect from 1.4.1998. The Department of Rural Development has also been assistin the States for strengthening the infrastructure for testing of water quality. As per this, a sophisticated testing equipment (ION meter) is proposed for NCT of Delhi to enable the State to expedite testing of sources for possible fluoride contamination.

AIDS by medical apparatus

5099. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the medical apparatus used by dentists is one of the factors for spread of AIDS; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government in this regard;

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI N.T. SHANMUGAM): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The National AIDS Control Organisation is conducting training programmes for all dentists on infection control practices including disinfection and sterilization. A manual has been developed on Guidelines for ""Hospital infection control—standard operating procedure" and this has been distributed to all medical institutes including Dental colleges. A chapter on proper disinfection of dental equipment is included in this manual.

Use of incinerators to dispose of hospital waste

5100. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 202, given in the Rajya Sabha in the 25.2.2000 and state:

(a) whether hospitals in private sector are not using incinerators for disposal of hospital waste due to which infectious diseases such as Hepatitis-B, AIDS, etc. have been spreading;

(b) if so, whether the Union Government would order mandatory use of incinerators for hospitals to check spread of diseases; and

(c) if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI N.T. SHANMUGAM): (a) In accordacne with the Bio-Medical Waste (Management & Handling) Rules, 1998, every occupier wherever required, has to set up requisite bio-medical waste treatment facilities like incinerator, autoclave, microwave system for the treatment of waste, or ensure requisite treatment of waste at a common waste treatment facility or any other waste treatment facility in accordance with the time schedule given in Schedule VI of the Rules. The date prescribed for setting up waste treatment facilities is 30th June, 2000 or earlier for hospitals and nursing homes in towns with population of 30 lakhs and above and for hospitals and nursing homes with 500 beds and above in towns with population of below 30 lakhs. Some of the hospitals in private sector have taken initiative for setting up of common Bio-Medical waste treatment facilities.

(b) and (c) There is no proposal to make the use of incineration mandatory for hospitals. The Bio-Medical waste (Management & Handling) Rules, 1998, give various options for management and disposal of hospital wastes. The hospitals are free to choose the disposal methods including use of incinerators.

Homoeopathic Pharmacy Act

5101. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal for introduction of Homoeopathic Pharmacy Act for Homoeopathic Pharmacists in India is under active consideration of Government;

(b) if so, the future short title, extent and commencement/Interpretation and the future Act to regulate the profession of Homoeopathic Pharmacy; and

(c) by when the Homoeopathic Pharmacy Act would be enforced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI N.T. SHANMUGAM): (a) Yes, Sir.